of investible resources out of which, after meeting working expenses etc. further investments are made in the entire network, including rural areas.

Expansion of postal services network

2060. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Business Standard dated the 7th September, 1998 under the caption 'Postal charges may be pegged to costs';

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government to the observations made therein and facts of the matter;

(c) the details of the action plan finalised for the current year and Ninth Five Year PLan period for expansion of Postal network and services, State-wise and for Maharashtra in Particular; and

(d) the details of thrust areas identified for increased earning of revenue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The news item mentions about National Postal Policy as also efforts being made by Department of Posts to generage additional resources. While the National Postal Policy is yet to be finalised, Government is keen to improve the quality of postal services and pursue the objective of extending basic postal facility to the rural areas at affordable prices and also provide services including value added services to meet the emerging market needs.

(c) The details of Annual Plan are at Annexure "A" [*See* Appendix 185, Annexure No. A] (tentative subject to revision). The ninth plan proposals (tentative subject to revision) are at Annexure-"B" [See Appendix 185, Annexure No. B] The Department does not make any state-wise provision in the five year plan proposals. However, circlewise details of expansion of postal network during the current year is given at Annexure "C" [*See* Appendix 185, Annexure No. C] and activities that are likely to be undertaken during the current year and Ninth Plan for Maharashtra circle are at Annexure "D". [See Appendix 185, Annexure No. D]

(d) The details of thrust areas identified for increased earning of revenue are as under:—

(i) Speed Post

(ii) Business Post

(iii) Express Parcel Post

(iv) Commercial Publicity

Common Towers for Microwave Facilities

2061. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any policy decision has been taken to provide common towers for microwave facilities; if so, the details thereof;

(b) the States selected for installation of such towers and the number of towers constructed by Department of Telecommunication in Himachal Pradesh especially at Bharani Fort in Mandi District, Thanedhar in Simla District, Ashapuri in Kangra District, Jijli Mahadevari in Kullu District; and

(c) whether despite several reminders, television equipment has not been provided in this regard and by when Government propose to provide the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes, Sir. In 1995 a policy decision was taken by Telecom Commission & Ministry of Information & Broadcasting jointly for co-locating VLPTs (very low power transmitters) with DOT (Department of Telecommunications) microwave stations including towers for installations & commissioning of VLPTs by Doordarshan Department subject to technical feasibility.

(b) and (c) Doordarshan sent proposal for some stations of Himachal Pradesh for this sharing of infrastructure.

The status of DOT towers and provision of Doordarshan equipment is as follows:

Name of Place	Name of District	Remarks
Bharani Fort	Mandi	There is no place called Bharani Fort in Mandi district. However, a VLPT is working at Ajhu Fort in Mandi District in DOT premises.
Thanedhar	Simla	Tower at this station is being shared with Doordarshan for TV transmission.
Ashapuri	Kangra	Proposal for utilisation of Ashapuri tower by Doordarshan is under consideration by DOT. Equipment has been ordered by Doordarshan.
Bijli Mahadevan	Kullu	The tower foundation work has been completed. Tower erection is due. However, Doordarshan has not approached DOT yet. Equipment is available with Doordarshan and the VLPT is due for commissioning in 1999.

Customer friendly Telecommunication

2062. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of steps recently taken by Government to make telecommunication more commercial and customer-friendly.

(b) whether telephone directories for Delhi are likely to be published now;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Sir, "Customer Service Centres" have been opened all over India, as a commercial & customer friendly gesture with a 'single window concept'. Recently some more customer friendly steps like 'Help-Line Services' for fault rectification, computerisation of customer service centres, computerised director enquiry, changed number announcements, voluntary deposit scheme & credit card scheme have been introduced to win over the confidence of our valued customers.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Telephone Directories for MTNL Delhi are likely to be published by March 1999.

(d) Does not arise in view of (b&c) above.

Private Investment in Telecom Sector

2063. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Telecommunications has set up a "Focus action group on private investment promotion" to encourage, stimulate and facilitate private investment in the telecom sector;

(b) if so, what are the names of the members of the group; and

(c) by when the group is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The names of the members of the Group are:—

(i) Shri Dhanendra Kumar, Additional Secretary (PIP)

(ii) Shri Prakash Narain, Deputy Director General (P & PIP)

(iii) Shri J. K. Chhabra, Deputy Director General (BS)

(iv) Shri J. R. Gupta, Deputy Director General (VAS)

(v) Shri N. Parameswaran, Deputy Director General (LR)

(vi) Smt. Sadhana Dixit, Deputy Director General (LF)

(vii) Shri N. P. Singh, Director (PIP)